

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 583

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 5468

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PE

SUBJ: PERU'S CONSTITUENT ELECTIONS: SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

REF: LIMA 5419

1. SUMMARY: AT FIRST READING THE PERUVIAN ELECTORATE WOULD SEEM ON JUNE 18 TO HAVE DIVIDED INTO THREE QUITE DISTINCT BLOCS: THE RIGHT, CENTER-RIGHT WITH ABOUT 31 PERCENT OF THE VOTES; THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT CENTER-LEFT (APRA) WITH ABOUT 37 PERCENT; AND THE LEFT, FAR-LEFT WITH ABOUT 30 PERCENT. BUT DOUBTS ARE RAISED THAT THIS READING WILL HOLD UP INTO THE FUTURE. THE OVERALL VOTE HAD A STRONG FLAVOR OF PROTEST IN WHICH IDEOLOGY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN DOMINANT. BELAUNDE'S AP, A PARTY WITH A PAST RECORD OF FORGING ALLIANCES ACROSS IDEOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES, WAS
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ABSENT. FURTHER, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN APRA AND THE PPC IS THERE. THOSE PARTIES CAN CONTROL THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IF THEY CAN COMPOSE THEIR DIFFERENCES. AND THEY WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE TO DO SO IN THE FACE OF THE LEFTIST CHALLENGE AND THE MILITARY ALTERNATIVE. THE LEFT ALSO HAS SIGNIFICANT UNITY PROBLEMS. HOW FOCEP CHOOSES TO

TREAT THE ASSEMBLY REMAINS AN UNKNOWN AT THIS POINT. THE MILITARY, TOO, MUST DECIDE HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS NEW POLITICAL ENTITY AND ESPECIALLY THE LEFT, WITH POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE IMPLICATIONS. US INTERESTS REMAIN BEST SERVED BY CONTINUATION OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS TOWARD WHICH MORALES BERMUDEZ HAS TAKEN AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP. BUT UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS CONDUCT, ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE GOP'S ECONOMIC AUSTERITY PROGRAM, AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF CONTINUING ECONOMIC AND LABOR PROBLEMS WILL OFFER CHALLENGES TO THE CURRENT REGIME AND TO US INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE ONLY NONOFFICIAL AND IMCOMPLETE DATA ARE YET AVAILABLE ON THE JUNE 18 ELECTION RESULTS AND A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ASPECTS ARE AS YET UNKNOWN (EXACT DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY, VOTING PATTERNS, THE OUTCOME OF THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE), THE FOLLOWING OFFERS SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (REFTEL) ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ELECTION IN LIGHT OF THE AVAILABLE PROJECTIONS.

3. THE HEAVY VOTE LAST SUNDAY REFLECTED BOTH A PROTEST AGAINST THE FAILURES OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND AN APPARENT SHIFT IN THE POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY. THE OLD RIGHT, TIED TO THE MEMORIES OF THE ODRIA AND PRADO GOVERNMENTS VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED; BUT
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THE NEW RIGHT OR CENTER-RIGHT OF BEDOYA'S PPC, STRIDENTLY ANTI-MILITARY AND FAR LESS TRADITION-BOUND, PROSPERED. THE MARXIST LEFT, PARTICULARLY IN ITS ULTRA CONFIGURATION, GAVE SIGNS OF BECOMING A GENUINE POLITICAL FORCE. APRA IN THE CENTER-LEFT IMPROVED SOMEWHAT ON ITS TRADITIONAL THIRD OF THE ELECTORATE. THE OVERALL RESULT COULD BE READ AS FORESHADOWING THE KIND OF THREE-BLOC ALIGNMENT THAT AFFLICTED CHILEAN POLITICS FROM 1958-73. BUT THE OBVIOUS PROTEST NATURE OF THE VOTE AND THE ABSENCE OF BELAUNDE'S AP WITH ITS BROADER APPEAL ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT THAT CONCLUSION. AS YET THE IDEOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES ARE BY NO MEANS AS FIRMLY SET AS THEY WERE IN CHILE. THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE ROOM FOR MANEUVER AND, IF APRA'S PAST IN PARTICULAR IS ANY INDICATION, THE DISPOSITION TO BARGAIN.

4. APRA: THE INSTITUTION GOES ON - APRA NOT ONLY WON THE PLURALITY BUT MADE THE BEST SHOWING IN ITS HISTORY (37 PERCENT VS. LESS THAN 34 PERCENT IN 1962) ALTHOUGH IT COULD NOT CAPTURE A MAJORITY. DESPITE THE AGE OF ITS LEADERSHIP AND ASSERTIONS IT HAD LOST SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS, THE APRA MACHINE FUNCTIONED WELL, PULLING

IN THE NORTH AS EXPECTED YET PERFORMING CREDITABLY IN LIMA AND THE SOUTH AS WELL. THE PARTY EVIDENTLY STILL HAS A FOLLOWING AMONG YOUTH (ALL FIRST TIME VOTERS) AND HAS GAINED IN RESPECTABILITY AMONG THE MIDDLE AND PROFESSIONAL CLASSES WHO ONCE STOOD ALMOST UNITED IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO HAYA'S PROLETARIAN PARTY. THE LATIN AMERICAN VERSION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY CONTINUES TO ATTRACT ONE-THIRD OF THE ELECTORATE, EVEN DISCOUNTING WHAT AP SUPPORT IT MAY HAVE RECEIVED (PARA 3).

5. BEDOYA AND THE BACKLASH - THE PPC RAN A HARD, ENERGETIC CAMPAIGN TO BUILD SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE FOR BEDOYA REYES AND EVIDENTLY PICKED UP A FAIR SHARE OF THE BELAUNDE VOTE. HIS ATTACKS ON THE FIRST PHASE AND THE MILITARY AND HIS ENDORSEMENT OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN PRIVATE INVESTMENT HAD EVIDENT APPEAL TO CONFIDENTIAL

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MANY VOTERS DISILLUSIONED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION. THE FORMER LIMA MAYOR WON THE CAPITAL, AS PREDICTED, BUT HE LACKED THE KIND OF GRASS ROOTS INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT APRA ENJOYS IN THE PROVINCES. NONETHELESS, PPC HAS NOW EMERGED AS A NATIONAL PARTY AND SHOULD REMAIN AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE POLITICAL SCENE.

6. THE LEFT: FOCEP THE DARK HORSE - THE COLLECTION OF LEFTIST PARTIES, GROUPED LOOSELY TOGETHER IN THE TROTSKYITE FOCEP, REPRESENTS THE MAJOR SURPRISE OF THE ELECTION, EMERGING AS THE THIRD RANKING PARTY (ALTHOUGH WITH AN ESTIMATED 11-PLUS PERCENT OF THE VOTE, A RATHER DISTANT THIRD TO PPC). NUMEROUS EXPLANATIONS ARE NOW BEING OFFERED FOR FOCEP'S RELATIVE SUCCESS (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS ON FOCEP BACKGROUND). AMONG THE MORE REASONABLE ARE THE PERSONAL FOLLOWING OF THE PARTY'S "ROBIN HOOD" LIKE LEADERS SUCH AS LABOR LAWYER GENARO LEDESMA, FORMER GUERRILLA AND CASTRO FANCIER HUGO BLANCO, AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST LAURA CALLER, AND THE PROTEST VOTE AGAINST THE MILITARY AND THE MAY AUSTERITY MEASURES. FOCEP WAS ALSO THE ONLY PARTY ON THE LEFT UNTARNISHED BY THE VELASCO YEARS WHEN SOME OF ITS ACTIVISTS, INCLUDING LEDESMA, WERE EXILED. THE PARTY WORKED HARD IN THE CITY SLUMS AND LABOR SECTOR (ESPECIALLY MINING) BUT ITS PERFORMANCE WAS UNEVEN, WITH HEAVY VOTES IN SOME AREAS (CERRO DE PASCO, TACNA) AND TESTAMENTS IN OTHERS (LAMBAYEQUE, PIURA). ABOUT HALF OF ITS VOTE CAME FROM LIMA, HOWEVER. IN CONTRAST TO FOCEP, THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LIMA 5468

REMAINING LEFTIST PARTIES FINISHED POORLY. THE PSR, THE NEW
AVOWEDLY FIRST PHASE PARTY, FOUND THE PRO-VELASCO VOTE EITHER
DIMINISHED OR ILLUSIVE, DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF PROMINENT FIRST
PHASE LEADERS SUCH AS GENERAL RODRIGUEZ FIGUEROA, THEIR ALLENDED
SUPPORT IN CAMPESINO ORGNIZATION AND THEIR APPEAL AS A
"PERSECUTED" PARTY. CORNEJO CHAVEZ' CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, ALSO
ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIRST PHASE, DID EVEN WORSE THAN THE PSR,
PARTLY PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE OBVIOUS OPPORTUNISTIC CHARACTER
OF ITS LEADER. FINALLY, THE WEAK PERFORMANCE OF JORGE DEL
PRADO'S OL LINE COMMUNIST PARTY BELIES ITS ALLEGED
INFLUENCE AMONG THE RANK AND FILE OF THE CGTP, FROM WHICH IT HAS
TRADITIONALLY DRAWN ITS POLITICAL STRENGTH. THE EXTREMIST
UDP DID EVEN MORE POORLY, WITH ONLY 4 PERCENT OF THE PROJECTED
VOTE. NONETHELESS, THE UNIMPRESSIVE RECORD OF THE INDIVIDUAL
LEFTIST PARTIES (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FOCEP) SHOULD NOT OBSCURE
THE FACT THAT THE TOTAL LEFTIST VOTE REPRESENTS PERHAPS 30
PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE. IF UNITY CAN BE FORGED
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IN THAT QUARTER -- DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO
CONCEIVE -- THE LEFT COULD BECOME A POLITICAL FORCE
TO BE RECKONED WITH.

7. FOR THE FUTURE. ISSUES TO BE FACED. IN TERMS OF THE ASSEMBLY
ITSELF AND THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO CIVILIAN RULE, A WORKABLE
POLITICAL MAJORITY IS ABVIOUSLY ESSENTIAL. APRA AND PPC ARE THE
LOGICIAL PARTNERS, SINCE BETWEEN THEM (AND WITH THE LIKELY ADDI-

TION OF THE FEW SEATS OF THE RIGHTIST PARTIES) THEY COULD CONTROL SOME 70 PERCENT OF THE ASSEMBLY VOTE. PRIVATELY, APRA AND PPC PARTY LEADERS TOLD US BEFORE THE ELECTION AN ALLIANCE WAS POSSIBLE, BUT ALL AWAITED THE ELECTORAL OUTCOME AS A TEST OF RELATIVE STANDING. SUBSEQUENTLY, NEITHER APRA OR PPC REPRESENTATIVES HAVE RULED OUT AN ALLIANCE IN THE WAKE OF THE INITIAL RETURNS (LIMA 5398). AND BOTH ARE STUDYING THEIR POSITIONS. BUT MAJOR PROBLEMS REMAIN, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH ARE THE CONSIDERABLE EGOS AND PERSONAL SENSIBILITIES OF HAYA AND BEDOYA, AND THE PPC LEADER'S EVIDENT PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS. SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES, TOO, MUST BE RESOLVED SUCH AS APRA'S LONGSTANDING ECONOMIC CONGRESS PROPOSAL AND ITS SUPPORT FOR THE DIRECT VOTE FOR ILLITERATES, BOTH OF WHICH PPC OPPOSES. THESE MAY BE OVERCOME IN THE FACT OF THE THREAT FROM THE LEFT AND THE GRIM ALTERNATIVE OF CONTINUED MILITARY RULE SHOULD THE ASSEMBLY COLLAPSE, BUT IT WILL BE A TEST OF STATESMANSHIP TO FORGE AND MAINTAIN AN ALLIANCE.

8. THE MODERATES ARE NOT ALONE IN THEIR PROBLEM, HOWEVER; THE LEFT FACES PERHAPS EVEN GREATER DIFFICULTY IN UNITING ITS FORCES WITH THE REBELLIOUS AND DISPARATE FOCEP ITS SELF-APPOINTED LEADER. IDEOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL RIVALRIES ARE EVIDENT BETWEEN THE TROTSKYITE FOCEP AND THE MOSCOW LINE PCP, NOT TO MENTION THE FIRST PHASE PSR, TOWARD WHICH FOCEP LEADERS NO DOUBT BEAR DEEP RESENTMENTS. (HUGO BLANCE HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY CRITICAL ABOUT THE FIRST PHASE MILITARY LEADERS). THERE IS ALSO THE QUESTION OF HOW CONFIDENTIAL

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FOCEP, WITH ITS NEW PROMINENCE AS PERU'S "THIRD FORCE" CHOOSES TO ACT IN THE ASSEMBLY TO FURTHER ITS ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF "TOTAL POWER." IF IT CAN MAINTAIN ITS OWN UNITY (A BIG IF) WILL IT USE THE ASSEMBLY AS A PLATFORM TO CONTINUE ITS ATTACKS ON THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND THE MODERATE PARTIES AS THE LATTER SUSPECT? WILL IT ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT ASSEMBLY PROCEEDING TO FORCE ITS CLOSING BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE HOPES OF FURTHER POLARIZING THE POPULACE? OR MIGHT IT TAKE A MORE REASONABLE POSTURE NOW THAT IT HAS A LEGITIMATE STANDING AND NEGOTIATE FOR A SUBSTANTIVE ROLE WITHIN

THE ASSEMBLY, ESPECIALLY IF APRA AND PPC ARE UNABLE TO COME TO TERMS? (IN THIS REGARD, LEDSMA'S PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AS A DEPUTY IN THE 60'S SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED)

9. THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT MUST FACE CRITICAL ISSUES AS WELL, THE MOST PRESSING BEING THE SEATING OF THE DEPORTED LEFTIST CANDIDATES. FOCEP, ALONG WITH PSR, IS VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED BY THE MILITARY. (THE MILITARY'S PRE-ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT OF LEFTIST STRENGTH SHOWED A MAXIMUM OF 30 PERCENT BUT THEY EXPECTED THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO MAKE THE STRONGEST SHOWING). THE GOP PUBLICLY STATED THAT ELECTED MEMBERS MAY RETURN AND TAKE THEIR SEATS WITH PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY; IT HAS REAFFIRMED THIS PRIVATELY TO US. STILL, THE LEFTIST VOTE IN

GENERAL AND FOCEP IN PARTICULAR COULD INCREASE MILITARY ANTAGONISMS AND PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO OPPOSED ELECTIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE. THERE MIGHT ALSO BE THE TEMPTATION TO BAR THE RETURN OF CONTROVERSIAL CANDIDATES THROUGH SOME LEGALISM, BUT IF THE GOP CHOOSES THIS COURSE OF ACTION, ITS FACES PREDICATABLE INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS A IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION WITH THE ASSEMBLY AS SOON AS ITS OPENS. THE QUESTION OF THE LEFT IS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE SINCE IT COULD ALSO STIMULATE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY AND CONCEIVABLY THREATEN MORALES BERMUDEZ. OTHER ISSUES THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED INCLUDE THE GOP'S POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ASSEMBLY AND THE ROLE OF BELAUNDE'S AP.

10. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. - THE PRINCIPAL US INTEREST IN
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PERU'S ELECTORAL PROCESS HAS BEEN THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN PERU AND THE RETURN TO ELECTED CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. TO DATE, THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL PLAN HAS GONE WELL DESPITE NUMEROUS PROBLEMS, AND MORALES BERMUDEZ HAS KEPT HIS PROMISE TO THE POPULACE. NONETHELESS, THE RELATIVELY STRONG SHOWING OF THE LEFT, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TURMOIL WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY SHOULD THE MODERATES NOT COME TO TERMS COULD TEST THE MILITARY UNITY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL PROGRAM. FINALLY, THE GOP MAY ALSO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ADHERE TO ITS ECONOMIC AUSTERITY PLAN IN THE FACE OF LIKELY CRITICISM FROM VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY. THE DRAMA WILL UNFOLD AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF LABOR UNREST, ONCE THE DISTRACTION OF ELECTIONS AND THE WORLD CUP PASS.

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